



CHESTERFIELD
BOROUGH COUNCIL

TAXI CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

ANNUAL REPORT

2019/20

Taxi Consultative Committee

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1. Background

- 1.1 The Taxi Consultative Committee was established in March 2011 as an informal consultative body for the Council and the taxi trade locally in Chesterfield.
- 1.2 The purpose of the Committee is to meet with local representatives of the taxi trade to discuss matters of mutual concern and interest relating to the licensing of vehicles, drivers and operators.
- 1.3 The Committee's aim is to act as a representative body for the whole hackney carriage and private hire trade, ensuring consultation with all licence holders to enable the Council to make fully informed decisions, through the delegated authority granted to the Appeals and Regulatory Committee or appropriate Council officers.
- 1.4 The Committee's terms of reference are included in the Council's Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy. These terms of reference were most recently reviewed and updated in May, 2017, prior to the amendment made in October, 2019 (referenced in paragraph 2.4 below).

2. Membership and Meetings

- 2.1 The Committee is scheduled to meet at least four times per year. During 2019/20 it actually met only three times in July and October, 2019 and January, 2020, as the meeting scheduled for April, 2020 was cancelled due to the restrictions in response to the Coronavirus pandemic.
- 2.2 The Committee is set up to have nine members - three hackney carriage licence holders (persons who drive or own a hackney carriage), three private hire licence holders (persons who operate or drive or own a private hire vehicle) and three elected members of the Council (selected in accordance with the political balance of the Council).
- 2.3 Nominations of hackney carriage and private hire representatives were invited in May 2019 to serve on the Committee from June, 2019 until May, 2021. Initially only three nominations of private hire representatives were received, with two of these having fewer than the required number (10) of other licence holders supporting their nomination.
- 2.4 Subsequently, a further nomination of one hackney carriage representative was received and the Committee's terms of reference were revised by the Appeals and Regulatory Committee to allow the appointment of nominated representatives supported by fewer than 10 licence holders.
- 2.5 For 2019/20 the three elected members were:

Councillor K Caulfield (Chair)

Councillor D Collins (Vice-Chair)

Councillor P Niblock

the three private hire licence holder representatives were:

Mr J Brookbank
Ms A Dickens
Mr M Rahman

and the hackney carriage licence holder representative was:

Ms M Shaw (wef October, 2019)

2.6 In addition to the above members of the Committee, officers from the Council's Licensing and Legal sections and from Derbyshire Police and Derbyshire County Council Highways department are invited to attend the Committee to advise the Committee members.

2.7 There has been good attendance at meetings during 2019/20 by elected members, but poor attendance by trade representatives, with average attendance as shown below (with comparison to the previous year):

Average Attendance	2019/20	2018/19
Elected members	2.67	1.5
Hackney carriage representatives	0.0	2.0
Private hire representatives	1.0	1.75

2.8 At the January, 2020 meeting concern was expressed at the poor attendance of trade representatives, and it was agreed to seek the views of the representatives on the future viability of the Committee.

- 2.9 Following the cancellation of the April meeting the future viability of the Committee was considered further at the meeting in July, 2020, attended by three elected members and two trade representatives. The meeting concluded that any issues were currently being satisfactorily addressed through direct communication between drivers, operators and the Licensing section without the need for meetings of the Committee.
- 2.10 It was therefore agreed to suspend the meetings of the Committee scheduled for October, 2020 and January, 2021, and to then review in early 2021 whether there continued to be a role for the Committee or to recommend to Council that it be dissolved.

3. Issues Considered and Outcomes

- 3.1 At each of its meetings the Committee considers the reported crime figures relating to the taxi trade in the Chesterfield and the Bolsover and North East Derbyshire policing sections, along with any other Police related matters, issues relating to Derbyshire County Council Highways and actions taken by the Licensing team since the previous meeting.
- 3.2 The taxi related crime figures varied between 28 and 39 in the first three quarters of the year, with an average of 33.3 per quarter. This is slightly higher than the figures for 2018/19, when the average was 29.5 per quarter.
- 3.3 The most common type of crime was passengers making off without payment, making up 56 % of the total number of reported crimes.

- 3.4 The Highways proposals for the public realm improvements on Elder Way and Knifsmithgate, including the revised location of the taxi rank to Knifsmithgate, were considered by the Committee throughout the year, leading to the formal Traffic Regulation Order being made in late 2019.
- 3.5 The Licensing team has reported to each meeting on the number of licences suspended or revoked and the number of vehicles which had failed the vehicle test in each quarter. It has also reported on the reduced waiting times for tests following the introduction of computerised knowledge tests and the changed arrangements for drivers having their DVLA licences checked.
- 3.6 The Committee has also been consulted on proposed amendments to the Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Licensing Policy, including:
- to allow the name of the private hire operator / hackney proprietor to be displayed on the rear window of vehicles and to allow officers discretion to permit 'side signs' on the rear doors of larger vehicles (subsequently approved and implemented);
 - Bringing hackney proprietors into the licensing regime in accordance with the Institute of Licensing guidance;
 - Re-classifying a non-stop road accident as a major motoring offence;
 - Harmonising the various references within the policy to when the Council must be notified of convictions or being subject to an investigation.
- 3.7 In addition to these standard items, the Committee has also considered the hackney carriage unmet demand

survey undertaken in late 2019, the findings from which were considered by the Appeals and Regulatory Committee, where it was resolved to retain the existing limit on the number of licensed hackney carriages at 110.

4. Conclusions

- 4.1 The Committee has continued to provide a forum for the consideration of matters of mutual concern relating to the hackney carriage and private hire trade locally, with input from the Council's Licensing team, the Police and the County Council Highways team.
- 4.2 The potential role of trade representatives in raising concerns, considering issues and communicating with other members of the trade more widely is valued, although the fact that fewer nominations were received than places available and that there was limited attendance of trade representatives at meetings in 2019/20 has limited the effectiveness of this role.
- 4.3 Following consideration of the future viability of the Committee at its meeting in July, 2020 (as detailed at paragraphs 2.9 – 2.10 above), it was agreed that the meetings of the Committee scheduled for October, 2020 and January, 2021 be suspended, and to then review in early 2021 whether there continued to be a role for the Committee or to recommend to Council that it be dissolved.

5. Recommendations

- 5.1 That the annual report of the Taxi Consultative Committee for 2019/20 be noted.

- 5.2 That the decision of the Taxi Consultative Committee to suspend its meetings scheduled for October, 2020 and January, 2021 be endorsed.
- 5.3 That the conclusions of the review of whether there continued to be a role for the Taxi Consultative Committee be reported to the Appeals and Regulatory Committee in order to enable, if necessary, a recommendation to dissolve the Taxi Consultative Committee to be made to full Council in April, 2021.

Councillor Kate Caulfield
Chair, Taxi Consultative Committee
Chesterfield Borough Council